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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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COUNTRY	Bulgaria	REPORT NO.	
SUBJECT	State-run Homes for Young Children	DATE DISTR.	5 October 1955
DATE OF INFO.		NO. OF PAGES	3
PLACE ACQUIRED		REQUIREMENT NO.	
DATE ACQUIRED		REFERENCES	

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COUNTRY Bulgaria

SUBJECT State-Run Homes for Young Children

DATE DISTR. 8 Sept. 1955

NO. OF PAGES 2

REFERENCES:

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The Bulgarian Government maintained homes for the young children of working parents for propaganda purposes and kept these children for a reasonable price. Children up to the age of three years could be cared for in these homes for the day or for the week. In Sofia, there were about 50 such homes, 10 of which boarded children by the week. Mothers delivered their children in the mornings and picked them up in the evenings. For those who boarded by the week, children were delivered on Monday morning and were released to the parents on Saturday.

2. In general, the homes were poorly managed and had a low standard. Although the food was good and sufficient, the personnel were generally not well trained for the work. This was because professional childrens' nurses could not afford to work at their profession; they were paid only about 400 leva a month and were required to bring their own food to work with them. Many of the homes had no washing machines or steam driers, which created a problem for having on hand clean and dry linen. Sometimes, these unsanitary conditions resulted in illness among the children.

3. [redacted] However, even in this home, the children were kept in cold rooms until early winter and many acquired bad colds and ear trouble. [redacted] the personnel at this home were inconsiderate and, often, cruel. For example, in winter 1953, Dr. Pinkas (fnu), the operator of the home, gave orders that children must be brought to the home before a specified hour each morning. Occasionally, many mothers were forced to stand for at least 15 minutes outside the building with their children in sub-zero weather as punishment for not having their child at the home at the specified time. [redacted] many of the children were retarded in their development, particularly speech, because no individual attention was given them.

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4. Although these homes were badly run, it was cheaper for parents to place them in the homes on a daily or weekly basis than to hire a professional childrens' nurse to care for the child in its own home. The charge for keeping a child ranged from 50 to 150 leva per month but this charge was based on the parents' income;

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5. As a result of the low prices charged by these State-run homes, the demand was great; however, there were never enough vacancies in the homes to take care of all those who applied.

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